© 2021 Urbanities

When Walls Bear Witness: From Collective Memory to Tourist Artefact in Belfast and Derry[1]

Cécilia Germain Julien Doutre
(Grenoble Alpes University, AGEIS Laboratory, France)
cecilia.germain@hotmail.fr juliendoutre@hotmail.fr

Numerous murals adorn the walls of Belfast and Derry in Northern Ireland and are among the most famous tourist attractions of this province of the United Kingdom. These murals were made famous by 'the Troubles', the civil war that pitted Republican separatists against Loyalists (or Unionists) loyal to the crown of England for close to thirty years. During the conflict, factions from both sides painted building facades in their respective community for reasons of propaganda, or as a threat to the other side and as a tribute to the victims. Twenty years after the end of the conflict, it is clear that peace did not put an end to the practice of murals. New themes have emerged and certain murals, perceived as offensive, have been removed. This article provides insight into the heritage processes that have allowed this practice to continue and sheds lights on how it carried out at the end of the conflict.
Keywords: Heritage, city, murals, tourism, art.

During the 20th century, there has been a significant development of muralist practice and many examples can be found worldwide: Mexico (Ménard 2016), Argentina (Longoli 2015), Dakar (Diouf 2005), the United States (Mendoza and Torres 1994), the Basque country in France (Pragnère 2014) and Italy (Cozzolino 2014). There is even work focusing on an international approach to recent murals (García-Gayo and Giner-Cordero 2021). Usually employed to support political or social struggles, they sometimes refer to conflicts taking place in a local region or, in some cases, to conflicts occurring on the other side of the world.[2]

Murals in Northern Ireland are often associated with the civil war between Republicans, who want independence from the UK, and Unionists loyal to the British crown, also known as Loyalists. They have a sulphurous reputation linked to this conflict.

While they are primarily known for their evocation of 'the Troubles',[3] the wall paintings in the public space in Northern Ireland date back to the early 20th century and were designed to draw support during The Orange Troubles (Rolston 1995). This practice was originally undertaken by Loyalist communities and it was not before the 1970s that murals painted by Catholics began to appear (Jarman 1998, Rolston 1991). The reason explaining this late appearance of Republican murals is that the Flags and Emblems Act of 1954 punished such representations.[4] Murals were both a political propaganda tool (Rolston 1995) and a form of identity expression (Cozzolino 2013). They also served as spatial markers separating neighbourhoods (Jarman 1998). They, thus, both reinforced the peace lines that divided public

[1] We wish to acknowledge the contribution made by the Board and two anonymous expert reviewers for *Urbanities* to the final version of this article.
[2] For example: the international wall in Falls Road, Belfast, Northern Ireland. The mural located on the peace line in Belfast expresses Republican solidarity with the Palestinian struggle for equal treatment rights, the Basque community and South Africa.
[3] The Troubles refers to the recent period of conflict between the Catholic and Protestant communities in Northern Ireland. It stretched from the late 1960s, which was marked by the Catholic civil rights movement, to 1998, when the peace accords were signed.
[4] See https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/hmso/fea1954.htm

space and set up neighbourhood boundaries from the beginning of the Troubles (Ballif 2001). Murals are an important part of the visual and symbolic culture of working-class communities in Northern Ireland (Ballif 2001, 2012; Goulding and McCroy 2020).

In 1977, the Belfast City Council tried, for the first time, to get involved through the Community Murals Programme with the aim of changing some of the themes depicted. Young artists painted more than forty non-political and non-sectarian murals in various locations of Belfast (Sluka 1992). The government's wanted to attract foreign investors and give a positive image to stigmatised neighbourhoods that had been embroiled in community conflict for years. This approach was not as successful as expected, and the new murals disappeared with the rhythm of the seasons and bad weather (Rolston 1991).

Since 2006, certain murals evoking paramilitary groups have been erased as part of the Re-Imaging Communities Programme. The programme's objective is to erase any form of 'racist, xenophobic and sectarian' representation.[5]

This Programme sought to mark the transition to a post-conflict era. However, the demilitarisation process remains ambivalent. Paramilitary murals are often replaced by emblematic community figures, such as William of Orange, or by references to the British crown. These symbols are hardly neutral. Similarly, Republican murals shout out Northern Ireland's right to self-determination. Gaelic is often used and illustrations depict Republicans as victims, with almost Christlike figures such as the famous Bobby Sands, who died during a collective hunger strike concerning recognition of their status as war prisoners; after their death, he and his fellow IRA prisoners were turned into martyrs.[6] It is worth mentioning that the majority of the murals that have benefited from this programme are located in Loyalist neighbourhoods. It must be acknowledged, however, that the illustrations on the Republican murals are not as warlike as those of the Loyalists. They present themes different from Loyalist murals which, nevertheless, are far from neutral because their emphasis is on victimisation (Ballif 2015). Removed and replaced by others, the Loyalist murals generally represent armed and hooded paramilitaries and are seen by the Catholic community as particularly offensive.

Not all militaristic murals have been removed. Some were preserved for economic reasons associated with the development of tourism (Rolston 1991), and because they commemorate a collective memory (Conway 2010).

These murals are also a tourist attraction (Jarman 1998, Hill and White 2012), which may be viewed as a form of 'dark tourism' (Lisle 2006). In her study of tourism in post-Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, Julie Hernandez (2008) defines this concept as specific to cultural tourism, primarily aimed at allowing the direct experimentation of the arts, legacies and 'spirit' of a place. Foley and Lennon (2000) point out that in the case of dark tourism, the primary purpose of people's visit to a country or city is to see a site of death or disaster.

---

[5] The words 'racist', 'xenophobic' and 'sectarian' were used by the Art Council within the framework of the *Re-imaging Community Programme* to refer to problematic murals, see: http://artscouncil-ni.org/the-arts/visual-arts1/re-imaging-communities

[6] Mollica (2012) has discussed at length the analytical significance of hunger strikers and their actions.

However, none of the tourists that we interviewed came specifically to visit the Northern Ireland murals. They spoke about their interest in the history of the conflict and the Troubles, but their visit fell within a more global context: the discovery of a country that has many attractions to offer, such as the Giant's Causeway, the Game of Thrones Tour or the Titanic Belfast Experience. The Northern Irish conflict and the visit to the sites of remembrance with which it is associated, such as the murals, was not their primary motivation. In this view, one cannot really speak of 'dark tourism'. Visiting the Belfast's or Derry's murals can be seen as a form of phoenix tourism (Causevic and Lynch 2011) aimed at highlighting the reconciliation between the two communities and at promoting the development of the neighbourhoods concerned. The term 'traumascape', used by both Tumarkin (2005) and Naef (2011), may also apply to the type of tourism observed, which is interesting with regard to the murals of Northern Ireland. Indeed, these traumascapes are places where the Troubles are repeatedly staged by stakeholders in tourism who use the murals as decor.

In contrast to the tourist approach that seeks to preserve the murals from depicting the Troubles and especially those that make direct reference to the conflict, many local habitants push for the replacement of these murals with others that have nothing to do with the Troubles. Yet, remembrance is a very important aspect in the healing process because both communities must preserve their own identities while opening and sharing with the other (McDowell and Braniff eds 2014). Thus, recent and ancient murals coexist in an apparent chaos, but as we shall see later, their placement is no coincidence.

It is important to understand the role of tourism in the heritage production of space: these places that house the murals are produced, but they also produce their own space (Lefebvre 1974). Indeed, these spaces are the product of 30 years of conflict, often involving underprivileged neighbourhoods that were not spared by the Troubles and bear the stigma of those troubled times. These decaying spaces become 'factories' that produce ruins and traces (Veschambre 2005) that will become the monuments, the heritage of tomorrow (Dickinson 1996). Thus, tourism becomes the catalyst of a very singular production of space: the heritage.

There are several approaches concerning an ongoing heritage process involving items related to the Troubles. Most are generalist in terms of the heritage process, while some are very specific to the Troubles.

Most of the social scientists agree that heritage is a social construction rather than just a deposit of history, as it is often stated through common sense (Riegl 1984, Di Méo 1995, Davallon 2000, Rautenberg and Tardy 2013). Others, like Smith (2006), have examined the question of heritage, particularly with regard to the institutional discourse that serves as the foundation for the establishment of a collective memory and a place as heritage.

Murals are part of a dual heritage process. First, some of the murals that the residents of Belfast consider to be embarrassing because of their content have been replaced by murals that replace the violence displayed with identity references. Both these new murals and those that are preserved in their original state become sites of remembrance because of the people's will and the passing of time, ultimately acquiring the status of symbolic elements (Nora 1984-1992). Their primary role of murals as tools of political propaganda is fading, and they are becoming

symbols of identity specific to each community. This phenomenon, which combines the preservation and the removal of murals, fits into a broader heritage process that may lead to a material and symbolic recycling or reappropriation of the urban space (Veschambre 2005). Beyond this dynamic of conservation and erasure, these collective initiatives for selection of images present in the public space illustrate a more complex process of social agency that is expressed at community level, at the level of political power and in the economic domain. Thus, the analysis of the replacement or conservation of murals demonstrates how a community, a divided country, wishes to speak about its collective memory in relation to a civil war; but also, how this discourse evolves over time. Observation in the city and its neighbourhoods is therefore a valuable tool for making visible this process in action.

With this in mind, the present article focuses on how the different actors (residents, tourists, tourist guides, social workers) view the heritage process of murals and the extent to which they succeed in including them in their own practices. We will see how identity and economic and cultural elements succeed in transforming these murals into heritage objects.

Drawing on the examples of Shankill Road in Belfast and Bogside in Derry, respectively Loyalist and Republican neighbourhoods, we will show how several distinct heritage processes have been set in motion and how they coexist.

Methodology

This study of an urban setting is based on an ethnographic fieldwork carried out using semi-structured interviews, observation and photographic documents. Here, the ethnographic method, originally applied by anthropologists to the study of tribes or communities, is employed in a singular terrain: the city (Prato and Pardo 2013). Urban anthropology has gradually established itself as a relevant field for the study of the 'mille-feuille' structures of modern cities (Kanca 2021). Previously the domain of sociology, which often used a quantitative method (Durkheim 1951), the anthropological method has successfully confronted the study of cities by combining micro and macro approaches (Pardo 1996, Pardo et al. 2015, Pardo 2018).

In addition to belonging to the field of urban anthropology, our work is also related to visual sociology. The city is a favoured field for researchers interested in this visual approach (Zuev and Krase 2017), the value of which is no longer in doubt (Sztompka 2008, Collins 2004). The use of images in public space as research data is not only valid (Nathansohn and Zuev 2013), but it also provides insights into the way people behave and evidence of material products of culture, its iconography (Pauwels 2010: 546; Alexander et al. 2010). Visual sociology is well suited to the study of the social, political and economic issues surrounding murals, notably through the study of collective identities, the perception of urban landscapes, ethnic conflicts and collective identities (Nathansohn and Zuev eds 2013).

We have thus called upon the classic tools of anthropology and sociology, such as the methods of direct and participant observation and interviews, the tools of visual sociology, such as photographic-documentation, and data generated by the research subjects (Margolis and Pauwels eds 2011). The observational method is particularly useful as it allows us to understand the history of the city, its dynamics and the interaction of its inhabitants (Krase 2012).

Monuments, architecture and traces are all markers that illustrate the plurality of discourses in this territory. This makes it possible for us to understand how communities and, by extension, inhabitants and politicians deal with it.

To carry out this urban anthropology study, we conducted extensive observations and interviews in Belfast and Derry between the summer of 2014 and the autumn of 2016. The interviews lasted between thirty minutes and two hours. They were recorded with the consent of the interviewees and subsequently fully transcribed. All interviewees were given a pseudonym to guarantee their anonymity. Pseudonyms were chosen in a way that maintained national, social, generational and religious affiliation of the respondents. The interviews included several categories of people: inhabitants (8 interviews), tourists (12 interviews), people directly involved with the murals (9 interviews). The latter were artists, social workers working in neighbourhood associations and social centres, parishioners, tour guides and taxi drivers. The interviewees were contacted directly in the field, drawing on observations and tourist visits. The interviewees recommended several actors to whom we had less access.

To understand fully the context in which this ethnographic study took place, one must take into account the largely reserved attitude of the Northern Irish people concerning anything related to their contemporary history. We soon realised that almost everyone knew a family member who had died or had been imprisoned during the Troubles. The weight of the history associated with this conflict is still very heavy and it was often difficult to engage actors fully in conversation. Investigating this subject in Northern Ireland quickly proved challenging for a researcher, especially a foreign one. One needed to be patient through silences and missed appointments in order to collect precious information.

We went several times to Northern Ireland to explore and understand the muralist practice. As French researchers we had a specific approach because of our unfamiliarity with this field. It was both an advantage and an inconvenience to be a foreigner. The main advantage is that foreigners have external views on the matter. This means that they can see things that a local researcher would probably ignore, for, even if employing much reflexivity, one cannot fully avoid the common-sense relative to one's own culture (Geertz 1986).

Making a Detour via Belfast: Where a Working-class Neighbourhood is Learning to Link the Past and the Present

Shankill Road is part of West Belfast, a Loyalist stronghold that was particularly active during the Troubles and was infamous for the armed fighting between Loyalist militias and IRA. It shows a large number of murals, for some of which the distinguishing feature is the representation of hooded and armed paramilitaries. These are among Northern Ireland's most famous murals and the tourist flow to see them, which contrasts with the fact that Shankill Road is a working-class, socio-economically disadvantaged, area.

There have been many changes in recent years, as Edward, a social worker in a local association, explains:

> 'Lower Shankill was probably the first Loyalist community to join the Re-Imaging Communities Programme about a decade ago. The dominant paramilitary group in

> the region believed that "because gunmen were no longer on the streets, it was time to remove them from the walls". Belfast City Council agreed to fund the project and we negotiated an agreement in which seventeen "contentious" murals would be replaced one by one. We then embarked on a broad community consultation process, such as newspaper advertisements, the distribution of brochures in each household and workshops, to identify the themes the community wanted for the new murals designed, for example, around themes such as culture, sports, history, etc. The entire process from the adoption of the protocols to the replacement of the seventeen murals took most of the year.'
> (Interview with Edward, social worker, Shankill resident, 47 years old).

What Edward is actually presenting is the progress of the mural heritage process on Shankill Road. It appears that rather than being completed all at once this process occurred in phases. The first phase corresponded to inhabitants' assertions — irrespective of whether they were 'civilians' or members of a paramilitary militia — that it was time for the neighbourhood to engage in a process of appeasement in line with the peace agreements made more than a decade before. Then, Belfast City Council, which at the time was running a mural programme, agreed to fund the replacement of seventeen murals selected by the community. As these were gradually replaced, the inhabitants were systematically consulted. The new murals are, thus, the result of a cooperation between the inhabitants of Shankill Road and the city council. This not only legitimises the presence of these new murals in the neighbourhood, but also makes them a testimony of a bygone and accepted past.

Indeed, during our visit to Shankill Road, we saw these new murals alongside some of the old murals which are still in place. The paintings that have been replaced are easily identified because a plaque describes the old mural and explains the new one. The majority of the seventeen murals that have been replaced displayed masked paramilitaries holding Kalashnikovs. As Edward pointed out, the new murals centre on different themes:

> 'Social issues, rights, equality and history. For example, we now have murals on the themes of resilience, participation, children's A to Z history of Shankill, where Belfast's oldest parish stands.'
> (Interview with Edward, social worker, Shankill resident, 47 years old).

The focus is on the values of the inhabitants and on their history. Thus, Edward adds:

> 'It was very important to us that children did not face this violence on a daily basis. We don't want them to go through the same events as their parents did and, to overcome the violence, we had to remove it from the walls they walk along every day.'

The community therefore needed positive elements on these new murals which would be more in tune with their daily lives, and which would allow them to build a favourable post-conflict identity.

The photographs 1 and 2 below are examples of murals repainted as part of the Re-Imaging Communities Programme in collaboration with the Shankill Road neighbourhood

association. In photograph 1, the mural illustrates perfectly the themes desired by the inhabitants and the historical facts they wish to see on their walls. In photograph 2, a plaque explains the meaning of the new mural. It says: 'The Gold Rush mural replaces a paramilitary image of two silhouetted gunmen representing the Scottish Brigade. This new image by artist Tim McCarthy represents an event in July 1969 in Christopher Street when children digging in the rubble of the then demolished "Scotch Flats" discovered a hoard of gold sovereigns. Word spread quickly and thus began "the Gold Rush". The project was funded by the Re-imaging Communities Programme of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and delivered by Belfast City Council with the support of the Lower Shankill Community Association. The project would not have been possible without the support and the participation of the local community'.

Photograph 1, Photograph 2.
Photograph 1: 'The Gold Rush mural'. Source: C. Germain, J. Doutre, 2014.
Photograph 2: 'Plaque with old mural'. Source: C. Germain, J. Doutre, 2014.

The transmission of the neighbourhood's history and collective memory played a prominent role in the drive to replace murals. An informal discussion with the locals clearly reveals this logic. They are proud of the new works that adorn their walls. Emma, a 36-year-old Shankill resident and stay-at-home mother, explained that she was now happy to be able to walk the streets with her children and show them 'the history of this place, through the red hand of Ulster, the story of Luther, but also women's role in the community.' Thus, Emma presents the history of her community in a positive light, deliberately ignoring any reference to the Troubles. These new murals allow this resident to pass on to the younger generation a complex history that spans over the origins of the community (the red hand of Ulster), from Protestantism to the demand for egalitarian values.

The story of Shankill and its people is not limited to these dark times. On the contrary, community and individual practices express people' demands and the great influence of Northern Irish history, as well as a willingness to write a new chapter for a long-stigmatised neighbourhood. Emma remarks are related to what is selected to be part of a collective memory. Not every event that took place needs to be there; only those important to the group do (Halbwachs 1992). This also means that, as a social agency, every community will select its own important things that are to be part of its collective memory (Mcdowell and Braniff eds 2014).

Charlotte's story, however, shows a different perspective. It shows that a child can be an actor in this process and initiate conversation about this subject. Charlotte has to answer questions from her 3-year-old son, Liam, on a daily basis.

> 'It's mostly him who makes me talk about the murals (she says, while pointing to her son).
> Every time we leave the house, he asks me what's on the walls.
> He asks me, "What's the big hand?"
> I explain to him what it is and, to find out whether he recognises the colours, I ask him what colour is it? Red.
> Or he asks me, "What are the children doing? Who are the men?"'
> (Interview with Charlotte, 25, a supermarket employee, in a relationship. Interviewed in the presence of her son Liam, 3)

At a time when questions abound, murals succeed in getting parents to talk about the community's past and present. Murals then become an effective mediation tool between the mother and her son in order to explain part of the history of the neighbourhood, of its people and of one's own family.

Emma's and Charlotte's testimonies suggest that mothers may use these new murals as educational support. In this way, they can pass on their culture and some historical facts recognised by the community. Generally speaking, the parents of young children acknowledge the educational significance of these new murals and welcome the fact that they can present to their descendants something other than the painful memories associated with the Troubles. Through these images, they can thus explain on a daily basis the core elements of their culture, irrespective of whether they are religious, historical or even mythical.

Moreover, we were informed that the area was also home to the oldest parish in Belfast. This reinforces its historical and heritage value and distinguishes Shankill Road as a remarkable place in the northern Irish capital. It is therefore logical that a heritage process should have been adopted in this neighbourhood, drawing not only on its origins, but also on some of these new murals and sculptures. Some traces were erased, while some other are kept and extended (Veschambre 2018).

While an erasure logic prevails at Shankill Road, the murals that disappeared became part of the heritage: the way they are presented, forming a diptych with the new mural that replaces them, evokes memories of the past. Viewed on its own, the new mural shows only the themes it presents, but associated with the plaque that describes the old mural, the painting takes on another dimension: that of a site of remembrance.

Tourism professionals and visitors in search of traumascape do not share the same desire to ‘close the book’. As a result, not all the murals featuring paramilitaries have been removed. Certain murals, such as the ‘sniper’ holding his rifle in a way that gives the impression that he is following the observer, are famous and are among those visited by all those who pass through Shankill Road.

Photograph 3: ‘The sniper mural’. This mural depicts a sniper from the Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF), a Loyalist paramilitary group. Source: C. Germain, J. Doutre, 2014.

These murals are ‘typical’ of those drawn during the Troubles, and they are preserved and regularly restored; otherwise, weather-related hazards would have led to their disappearance over time. The logic of the tourism economy is therefore in contradiction with that initiated by neighbourhood’s people. This seems logical because there is no tourist infrastructure in Shankill Road; as we mentioned, it is a working-class neighbourhood. Apart from the taxis and bus queues bringing tourists to see the place, nothing is done to encourage the latter to stroll around. The only existing businesses are clearly intended for residents, who are not necessarily delighted to see visitors, as many are exasperated by the constant comings and goings of tourists. On occasion, the neighbourhood feels insecure, due to various factors: broken glass scattered at the foot of some murals, somewhat unfriendly people staring at tourists, and so on. This sense of insecurity was confirmed by Florine Ballif (2015), who deplored the aggression towards tourists (insults, stone-throwing) and the acts of vandalism targeting tourists’ vehicles (fires, damage). Several tourists whom we interviewed confirmed Ballif’s findings. For instance, Benjamin, a French tourist said:

> ‘I feel that the tension between the two communities is still present. It’s real, concrete; it’s not quite a thing of the past yet. You can see that there is always a wall separating the Catholic and Protestant neighbourhoods. It’s not without reason,

> and at night the wall is closed; that's not a negligible fact. The wall may well have fallen in Berlin but here there is still one that seems even more resistant but no one talks about it. I feel like it's taboo. Nobody talks about it on TV. You can also see that there's glass, debris on the ground. You understand that projectiles are always exchanged at night. It is not a climate of peace. Even when you're a tourist, you have to be careful; you can easily become a target. When I was taking pictures of the murals, of the peace line, I got insulted by a youth gang, children, who asked me what I was doing there, why I was taking pictures of this thing and that I should go back to my home and fuck myself, if you can excuse the language. I was shocked to see such young people — they were not even teenagers yet, given their appearance — make such remarks and express themselves with such violence. All because I was taking a picture of the mural. I think there is a hatred towards tourists who come to see these murals and I think it is transmitted quite early. Even though I am having a wonderful experience in this country, I think that one must remain cautious and on guard because the conflict is still present, despite everything.'
> (Interview with Benjamin, French tourist, engineer, 38 years old, travelling alone).

During observations in the Loyalist Sandy Row neighbourhood, we too noticed this animosity when one of us photographed a paramilitary mural that was being demolished. An inhabitant expressed his displeasure very loudly as he passed us by. His stare and his aggressivity made us leave quickly the area.

These stories, however, refer to relatively isolated cases. Indeed, the vast majority of visitors are delighted with the experience proposed by the tour guides and talk about the quality of the immersion. For instance, Patrice, a Belgian tourist traveling with his partner, a nurse of 34, no children, had this to say:

> 'It's impressive, it really feels like you're in that period, during the Troubles. You feel like everything has stayed in place, that nothing has changed since then. You can even feel the tension. It's crazy! You feel that it's hostile! Also, when you are able to take a tour with a guide, it really gives a different dimension. The guy, he was there, at that particular time, he knows many anecdotes, the history, because he experienced it, it's not just a guy who tells you something he memorised. It's his story, his country, what he went through. He even told us that his cousin died because of this conflict. It's really poignant, moving. It's going to remain an unforgettable moment.'

Tourists' sense of immersion is also due to the fact that the visits to Shankill Road are mostly confined to the street entrance where the paramilitary murals are located. These guided tours often omit the street centre, where the majority of the new murals are located.

Murals' location has always been very important and has a strong meaning. During the Troubles, the messages shown on murals in a neighbourhood were intended for the inhabitants, whereas those located outside were intended for enemies (Miossec 2009). The most menacing murals were positioned at the neighbourhoods' borders and were clearly visible. The primary role of the mural was to provide information that could not be found in the media and was

censored by the state, because it related to paramilitary groups or to groups considered to be terrorist. This information was intended either for the inhabitants of the neighbourhood — in the form of memorials where the victims of the conflict were celebrated and tribute was paid to the martyrs — or to the enemy threatened with death or reprisals. During the Troubles, it was belligerent-fuelled propaganda.

The heritage process of the Shankill Road murals highlights what is important for the inhabitants, now, in this post-conflict era. It shows what defines them and illustrates a wider identity process; that is, the redefinition of a collective identity (Rautenberg and Tardy 2013, Micoud 1995). This explains this mishmash of preserved, updated murals showing the plural identity of the inhabitants of this Belfast neighbourhood. This identity includes the memory of a dark period, of human losses and of the war, but also and above all of what they seek to build together, of their values. Even legends like the Red Hand of Ulster participate in the creation of a collective identity (Pardo and Prato 2019, Kanca 2021). However, the case of Shankill Road is not unique and there are very similar processes of heritage that mobilize a strong collective memory through a very assertive identity, one example of which is the work of Jean Clément Martin on the Vendée (Martin 1984).

Everything that we observed in Shankill Road shows how this process of building a collective identity is established, especially through the social agency dynamics of the people, the economic and institutional actors.

Having dealt with the meaning of murals in the Loyalist neighbourhood of Shankill Road, we now turn to the practice of painting murals in the Bogside neighbourhood of Derry. We will see that here, too, there is a heritage process in place which differs considerably from the Shankill Road one.

Imagining the Neighbourhood as a Site of Remembrance

Like Shankill Road, the Bogside neighbourhood outside the city walls of Derry was made famous by the dramatic events associated with the Troubles. This Catholic neighbourhood was the scene of the Bloody Sunday tragedy in the early 1970s.[7] Accordingly, the Bogside murals propose a radically different content from those at Shankill. Here, the role of the Republican mural is viewed from a different philosophical and artistic angle that somewhat contrasts with the Loyalist paintings discussed earlier. The Bogside artists who created these murals told us that they believe these painting to have a single purpose; that is, to show ‘what life was like during this difficult period’, and to ‘describe key events without submitting to political will’.[8]

The Bogside Artists worked together with local people, who support their approach, which rejects politics from all sides. These locals lent their walls and sometimes even directly assisted the artists by providing materials. This clearly shows that the Bogside residents support this project.

[7] Bloody Sunday refers to a massacre that occurred on 30 January 1972.

[8] The artist in question is keen to distinguish himself from Sinn Féin, the Catholic and Republican political party that is now part of Northern Ireland’s coalition government.

At first sight, the Bogside aera hardly appears attractive to tourists. It is located further down the historical city centre and has nothing particularly interesting to visit; no department stores, no remarkable architecture. This is a residential working-class area. However, the locals and the Bogside Artists have taken advantage of the geographical position and the neighbourhood's offering a commanding view when walking on the ramparts that surround the city centre. This panorama allows visitors to see numerous monumental murals, each occupying the entire façade of a building. Although the shortcut to the Bogside from the ramparts is not easily found, this alignment of murals encourages visitors to walk through a few streets in the neighbourhood and admire the murals more closely. Clearly, those murals have been positioned in a way that creates a pathway where visitors also find plaques explaining the events that occurred during the different periods of the Troubles, and specially of Bloody Sunday.

Photograph 4 Photograph 5

Photograph 4. Bogside mural named 'The Petrol Bomber'. It was painted in the summer of 1994 for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the 'Battle of Bogside'. Source: C. Germain, J. Doutre, 2014.
Photograph 5. Signboard exposing the Bloody Sunday presented on the murals. Source: C. Germain, J. Doutre, 2014.

The Bogside murals appeared to be positioned in a way similar to what we observed on Shankill Road. These murals are intended for tourists, for outsiders, and are there to be seen by them. The starting place for this tour is a house, or rather a white facade, since that is all that remains of the house. It is prominently located and lies on both sides of an avenue. On this facade is the famous slogan 'you are now entering free Derry'.[9]

[9] In front of the house, a plaque describes the history of this first Republican mural in Derry: on 5 January 1969, after a night of riots and following an assault by the British police, the words: 'You are now entering Free Derry' were painted on the facade of a house located at 33 Lecky Road. This graffiti has become a symbol of the civil rights struggle around the world. The remains of the house have been preserved but the street ceased to exist in 1975.

Photograph 6. 'The Free Derry house', a mural at Bogside entrance with the famous slogan: 'You are now entering free Derry'. Source: C. Germain, J. Doutre, 2014.

From there on, gigantic murals are placed one after the other to emphasise central themes in the iconography of Catholic Republicans, such as the struggle for human rights, illustrations of Bloody Sunday, the Republican hunger strikers who opposed the politics of Margaret Thatcher,[10] and even figures of world peace such as Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King and John Hume.[11] While this neighbourhood has all the trappings of authenticity, it is nothing more than a set-up, a musealisation of this urban space, transformed by these works into a testimony of the past. According to Philippe Dubé (2011), musealisation is a side effect of heritagisation, seeking to assign heritage status to an object or a place that was initially devoid of it.

Indeed, the gathering in one place of murals and other historical elements, such as the British government's response letters concerning their involvement in the Bloody Sunday incident and photographic testimonies portraying the harassment of inhabitants, create a particular atmosphere that goes beyond the individual scope of these different elements. This remind us of Crooke's work (2016), where it is argued that everyday items can be granted a heritage value after they go through three phases (mourning, evidence and museum piece). These photographs and letters are related to the Bloody Sunday incident and are used as evidence to push the United Kingdom to recognize its implication in the murder of innocent people. Finally, as time passed, those items became proof of this tragedy and are used as

[10] In 1976, imprisoned IRA activists lost their status as political prisoners. Their response to this loss of rights was a hygiene strike, followed by a hunger strike. The United Kingdom, led at the time by Margaret Thatcher, did not give in and ten prisoners, including their leader, Bobby Sands, succumbed to the hunger strike.

[11] John Hume is a Northern Irish politician who helped drive the Good Friday Agreement and was awarded the 1998 Nobel Peace Prize.

museum pieces. A display of documents on Bloody Sunday includes a letter from the British government dated 26 March 2013, which reads:

> 'Dear Mr Bradley,
> Thank you for the letter which you sent to the Prime Minister requesting an apology for the death of your brother Seamus Bradley, during the course of Operation Motorman in 1972.
> The Minister of State for the Armed Forces has now had the opportunity to review the report of the Historical Enquiries Team into the circumstances of your brother's death. I regret to inform you that he has concluded that there is nothing in the circumstances of his death, as detailed in the HET report, which would make it appropriate for the Government to apologise.'

The elements presented above appear to support the heritagisation of the neighbourhood, especially when one discovers that the series of twelve monumental murals created by the Bogside Artists is named the 'People's Gallery'. This gallery is designed and presented as an open-air museum, associating the characteristics of a society museum[12] (Drouguet 2015) with those of an art gallery, thus combining a collective memory and the observation of works of art. The Bogside Artists project is ambitious and relies on foreign viewers' curiosity and interest in learning part of the neighbourhood's inhabitants' history through these artworks. Similarly, as highlighted by certain graffiti drawings in streets further away from this neighbourhood, the inhabitants express their duty of remembrance with the slogan: 'Remembering the victims of Bloody Sunday'. A little further on, on the corner where a social centre stands, there is a wall with a mural on which is written 'the laughter of our children', which refers to a poem written by Bobby Sands in prison and often reproduced on murals; it reads, 'Our revenge will be the laughter of our children'. These works and other forms of free expression in the public space show a sense of identity and strong memory. However, these initiatives are few, even marginal, in the Bogside aera, where the 'official' murals are mainly displayed.

The murals painted by the Bogside Artists do not play the same role as those in Belfast's Falls Road[13] or Shankill Road. They were designed primarily as part of a collective artistic project in this open-air museum. In some cases, at least, their authenticity is also questionable. Indeed, some illustrations, like the 'peace' mural that shows a swirling image of a dove, appear to be out of step with other Republican murals. Others are reconstructions, such as the famous mural, 'You are now entering free Derry', which was repositioned at the entrance of the neighbourhood after the original was destroyed. The People's Gallery is therefore a construction that assembles the elements that disappeared from or did not initially exist in the area; in short, it is a simulacrum in Baudrillard's (1976) sense. When the signs of reality have

[12] By society museum, we refer to the categories described by Noémie Drouguet, ranging from 'a thematic collection to the national museum, from the open-air museum to museums without objects — and an exciting complexity worth exploring: political issues, identity issues, emotional relationships with memory, status of ethnological heritage.' (Drouguet 2015: 70).
[13] Falls Road is a famous Catholic neighbourhood in Belfast.

replaced the real, a simulacrum is set up where the copy replaces the original. As the neighbourhood has been redeveloped, it could not be presented as it was at the time of the Troubles. This, however, does not diminish its museum and heritage dimension. As Céline Éloy (2010) points out, an object on display in a museum is not judged according to its appearance but rather by its ability to illustrate an idea.

Nevertheless, many original elements were added to these simulacra. The numerous anti-British tags and stickers displayed throughout the neighbourhood also promote the authenticity of the place being visited. They give a certain taste of authenticity to the tourist's visit. Giulia, a 27-year-old Italian tourist and communications officer, married with one child, said:

> 'It's a visit not to be missed. It's an exciting place. You realise that the emotions associated with the conflict are still present. I feel like you get emotional when you're here, you feel that tragic things happened. You have pictures with wounded, mutilated people. It sends chills up your spine. You see that the locals are asking for justice for what happened. There are even letters from the British government. We are not here for the beauty of the place. Okay, you can see works of art and, aesthetically, they can represent something beautiful, but what matters to me is what they mean and the story they tell, like a memory, a memory visible to everyone. They show that one must not forget what happened here. You can also see in the plaques, the graffiti, that the tension is still there. You can even see them, the inscriptions, from the heights of the city, because they are written on rooftops.'

This Italian tourist shows how these items carefully chosen and gathered in this open space museum shape an agency (Conway 2008). Here, we can clearly see that the different elements that compose this scenery are more than the sum of its parts. Together, they evocate a vision of the Bloody Sunday tragedy that has been progressively built by 'memory entrepreneurs' (Conway 2008). Conway calls 'memory entrepreneurs' people who have shaped how the events of the bloody Sunday are perceived. Representations of this event did evolve and went through three phases. The first phase took place in the 1970s and focused on an internal and exclusive debate, whereby the community expressed mourning and anger. The second phase, from the 1980s to the early 1990s, saw a progressive opening in the discourse, and did involve an expression of commemoration, as well as a search for truth and justice. The third phase took place from the year 2000 to date, and involves a will to share and communicate the Bloody Sunday victims' memory to a wider audience. The museum of Free Derry is a good example of what has been created during this third phase. The work done by 'memory entrepreneurs' is clearly seen through the ethnography that led us to identify the musealisation process and the touristic approach of the Bogside area, where the public space is clearly used as an open-air museum and commemorative place.

This musealisation of the public space is clearly spoken by the Italian tourist quoted earlier, who refers to the choice of the items on show, the murals, the fact that it can all be seen from the ramparts of the old city. All of this contributes to create an impression of reality and authenticity, a testimony of what happened here. This is a way for this open-air museum to show agency; a capacity, that is, to act by bringing out the truth about the Bloody Sunday tragedy. It is thanks to such Agency that this kind of musealisation is possible.

Photograph 7.

Photograph 8.

Photograph 7. This photograph illustrates the anti-English and pro-IRA propaganda visible in the Bogside aera. Source: C. Germain, J. Doutre, 2014.

Photograph 8. Photograph of the roofs of the Bogside where one can see IRA and BRY (Bogside Republican Youth) inscriptions. Source: C. Germain, J. Doutre, 2014.

A closer look at some murals reveals adjacent panels showing documents and photographs in glass frames, such as photographs of wounds inflicted on protesters by the British military. All these elements, independent of whether they are original, help create an atmosphere of recollection, a willingness to witness the horrors of this conflict.

Entirely dedicated to tourism, the People's Gallery of Bogside is a gigantic open-air museum with monuments that contribute to giving the area a historical and memorial dimension. There is a real desire to explain the Bloody Sunday events under the necessarily biased prism of the Catholic artists who set up this gallery. Heritagisation is expressed here through the musealisation of more or less authentic elements that create a coherent whole. Letters, photographs and other archival documents enhance the visitor's experience and add a touch of authenticity that encourages real immersion. The artists' imagination that has made this area a site of remembrance, an open-air museum. Beyond history, beyond the tragic events that took place at Bogside, the arrangements made by artists and inhabitants have given the area a 'soul', a certain 'presence'. One may legitimately question whether this form of tourism, this sense of immersion, this sense of a place inhabited by the past, would exist without the murals, the signboards and the traces of such a past (letters, photographs).

It is this social agency, the inhabitants' will and the power to act that have given this image to the district; it is thanks to these illustrations, these memorials that this work of memory has come to be. This is the fruit of a collective fight by the inhabitants and the victims' families,

for whom it is invaluable that this memory should be passed on to the young generations, but also to all those who visit the aera.

Conclusion

Throughout this paper we tried to explain the processes of heritage in two areas: Shankill Road in Belfast and the Bogside in Derry. The initiative to paint murals in these two areas draws on different motivations.

In Shankill Road, the process of heritage is fairly transparent, considering that the community expresses its attachment to the United Kingdom through new murals. Today, it is no longer a matter of hooded paramilitaries and direct threats to the Catholic community, but of historical and religious figures and positive values that are representative of their identity. These new murals fit into an institutional and consensual framework characteristic of 'authorised heritage discourse' or AHD (Smith 2006). However, many murals depicting the Troubles were kept. They also are heritage, but for a different reason. These are the murals that tourists come to see, those that allow the 'black cabs' to organise visits to Shankill Road. They play a major economic role in this working-class area and provide work for many residents. Thus, Shankill Road displays both the AHD representation of their identity and a heritage that many would like to see disappear but which is preserved for necessary economic reasons.

In the Bogside, unlike the frescoes from the Re-imaging Programme, the murals have gradually become a legitimate heritage. Here, social agency is expressed in keeping with a collective memory that slowly shifts from a discourse made by the inhabitants for the inhabitants to a discourse made by the inhabitants for themselves as well as for the visiting tourists. Thus, the discourse evolves over time, particularly following the recognition of the British government's involvement in this tragedy. The version of a story that was not recognised at the time becomes the official story recognised by all. The AHD evolves accordingly, with time and in line with this recognition.

The study of Shankill Road and the Bogside illustrates two processes of heritagisation, which are certainly different but united by the same logic. In both places, the discourses, the AHD, the collective memory and also the identity of the two communities have evolved. This is an active and progressive process driven by a form of social agency. In this former civil war theatre, heritage action participates in an identity reconstruction that allows the two communities to heal their wounds and move forward.

References

Alexander, J., Smith, P., Dzhakupova, S., Kurakin, D. 2010. Strong program in cultural sociology. *Russian Sociological Review*, 9 (2): 11-30.

Ballif, F. 2001. Belfast: vers un urbanisme de paix ? Les recompositions spatiales au sortir de la guerre civile. *Les Annales de la recherche urbaine*, 91: 53-60.

Ballif, F. 2012. Artefacts sécuritaires et urbanisme insulaire: les quartiers d'habitat social rénovés à Belfast. *Espaces et Sociétés*, 150: 67-84.

Ballif, F. 2015. Belfast en temps de paix: la guerre civile comme attraction touristique. *Téoros*, 34 (1-2); online journal.

Baudrillard, J. 1976. *L'échange symbolique et la mort*. Paris: Gallimard.

Causevic, S., Lynch, P. 2011. Phoenix tourism: Post-conflict tourism role. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 38 (3): 780-800.

Collins, R. 2004. *Interaction Ritual Chains*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Conway, B. 2008. Local conditions, global environment and transnational discourses in memory work: The case of Bloody Sunday (1972). *Memory Studies*, 1 (2): 187-209.

Conway, B. 2010. New Directions in the Sociology of Collective Memory and Commemoration. *Sociology Compass*, 4: 442-453.

Cozzolino, F. 2013. De la pratique militante à la fabrication du patrimoine. *Cultures & Conflits*, 91-92: 45-64.

Cozzolino, F. 2014. L'histoire complexe du muralisme en Sardaigne. *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos, Pictures, memories and sounds*, 30 January; online.

Crooke, E. 2016. Artefacts as agents for change: commemoration and exchange via material culture. *Irish Political Studies*, 31 (1), 86-100.

Davallon, J. 2000. Le patrimoine: 'une filiation inversée'?. *Espace Temps*, 74 (1): 6-16.

Dickinson, J. 1996. Entropic zones: Buildings and structures of the contemporary city. *CNS*, 7 (3): 81–95.

Di Méo, G. 1995. Les nouvelles contradictions du territoire/New territorial contradictions. *Géocarrefour*, 70 (2): 169-175.

Diouf, M. 2005. *Mural Paintings and the Writing of History.* Ann Arbor, MI: MPublishing.

Drouguet, N. 2015. *Le musée de société. De l'exposition de folklore aux enjeux contemporains*. Paris: Armand Colin.

Dubé, P. 2011. Le musée dans ses états gazeux, vu sous l'angle de deux concepts: muséalité et communalité. *Sociétés*, 114 (4): 79-93.

Durkheim, E. 1951. *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*. New York: Free Press.

Éloy, C. 2010. Muséaliser l'art conceptuel: de Seth Siegelaub à Lawrence Weiner. *Culture & Musées*, 16: 93-111.

Foley, M., Lennon, J. 2000. *Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster*. New York: Continuum.

García-Gayo, E., Giner-Cordero, E. 2021. Crossroads: Urban Murals and Their Relationship to Memory, Tourism and the Possibility of Conservation and Restoration. In V. Santamarina-Campos, E.M. Martínez-Carazo, M. de Miguel Molina (eds), *Cultural and Creative Mural Spaces*. Cham: Springer.

Geertz, C. 1986. *Savoir local, savoir global les lieux du savoir*. Paris: P.U.F.

Goulding, S., McCroy, A. 2020. Representing the (un)finished revolution in Belfast's political murals. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 18 (5): 538-564.

Halbwachs, M. 1992. *On collective memory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Hernandez, J. 2008. Le tourisme macabre à La Nouvelle-Orléans après Katrina: résilience et mémorialisation des espaces affectés par des catastrophes majeures. *Norois*, 208: 61-73

Hill, A., White, A. 2012. Painting peace? Murals and the Northern Ireland peace process. *Irish Political Studies*, 27 (1): 71-88.

Jarman, N. 1998. Painting Landscapes: the place of murals in the symbolic construction of urban space. In A. Buckley (ed.), *Symbols in Northern Ireland*, Belfast: The Queen's University of Belfast.

Kanca, E. 2021. Warrior Values and Society. *Urbanities-Journal of Urban Ethnography*, 11 (1): 55-64; https://www.anthrojournal-urbanities.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/6-Kanca.pdf

Krase, J. 2012. An argument for seeing in urban social science. *Urbanities-Journal of Urban Ethnography*, 2 (1): 18-29; https://www.anthrojournal-urbanities.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/3-Krase.pdf

Lefebvre, H. 1974. *La Production de l'espace*. Paris: Anthropos.

Lisle, D. 2006. Local Symbols, Global Networks: Rereading the Murals of Belfast. *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 31: 27-51.

Longoli, A. 2015. Muralisme militant. *Cultures & Conflits*, 98: 169-186.

Margolis, E., Pauwels, L. eds. 2011. *The Sage Handbook of Visual Research*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Martin, J. C. 1984. *La Vendée, région mémoire*. In P. Nora, 1984-1992, t.l., *La République*: 595-617.

McDowell, S., Braniff, M. eds. 2014. *Commemoration as Conflict: Space, Memory and Identity in Peace Processes*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ménard, B. 2016. Mythes et héros de la Révolution mexicaine dans El laberinto de la soledad de Octavio Paz et le muralisme mexicain : un imaginaire collectif . *L'âge d'or,* 8; online.

Mendoza, R, Torres, C. 1994. Hispanic traditional technology and material culture in the United States. In T. Weaver (ed.), *Handbook of Hispanic Culture Anthropology*. Texas: University of Houston.

Micoud, A. 1995. Le bien commun des patrimoines. In *Collectif, Patrimoine culturel, patrimoine naturel*. Paris: la Documentation française.

Miossec, A. 2009. *Murals d'Irlande du nord, Quel avenir après cent années de pratique communautaire*. Rennes: Université Européenne de Bretagne.

Mollica, M. 2012. Political Manipulation: Death, Dying and Funeral Processes in Northern Ireland. In I. Pardo and G. B. Prato (eds), *Anthropology in the City: Methodology and Theory*. London: Routledge.

Naef, P. 2011. Du traumascape au touristscape. Regards croisés sur Vukovar et Sarajevo. *Tsantsa*, 16: 164-168.

Nathansohn, R., Zuev, D. 2013. Introduction. Sociology of the Visual Sphere. In: R. Nathansohn and D. Zuev (eds), *Sociology of the Visual Sphere*. New York: Routledge.

Nathansohn, R., Zuev D. eds. 2013. *Sociology of the Visual Sphere*. New York: Routledge.

Nora, P. 1984-1992. *Les lieux de mémoire*, Paris: Gallimard (7 volumes).

Pardo, I. 1996. *Managing Existence in Naples: Morality, Action and Structure*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pardo, I., Prato, G. B., Kaltenbacher, W. 2015. *Le positionnement de l'anthropologie urbaine*. Special issue of *Diogène*, 2015, 3-4 (no 251-252), 3-11.

Pardo, I. 2018 [2015]. Italian Elite Groups at Work: A View from the Urban Grassroots. In I. Pardo, G.B. Prato and W. Kaltenbacher (eds), *Placing Urban Anthropology*. English edition of *Le Positionnement de l'anthropologie urbaine*, Special issue of *Diogène*, 2015, 3-4 (no 251-252). Sage Online, Published February 14, 2018. https://doi.org/10.1177/0392192117740026

Pardo, I., Prato, G. B. 2019. Ethnographies of Legitimacy: Methodological and Theoretical Insights. In I. Pardo and G. B. Prato (eds), *Legitimacy: Ethnographic and Theoretical Insights*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pauwels, L. 2010. Visual sociology reframed: An analytical synthesis and discussion of visual methods in social and cultural research. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 38 (4): 545-581.

Prato, G. B., Pardo, I. 2013. 'Urban anthropology'. *Urbanities-Journal of Urban Ethnography*, 3 (2): 80-110; https://www.anthrojournal-urbanities.com/docs/tableofcontents_5/7-Discussions%20and%20Comments.pdf

Pragnère, P. 2014. Circulations transnationales: expressions murales partagées entre Irlande du Nord et Pays Basque. *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos*, *Pictures, memories and sounds*; online.

Rautenberg, M., Tardy, C. 2013. Patrimoines culturel et naturel: analyse des patrimonialisations. *Culture et Musées*. *Hors Série*: 115-138.

Rolston, B. 1991. *Politics and Painting: Murals and Conflict in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: Associated University Presses.

Rolston, B. 1995. *Drawing support 2: Murals of war and peace.* Belfast: Beyond the pale.

Sluka, J. A. 1992. The Politics of Painting: Political Murals in Northern Ireland. In C. Nordstrom and J. Martin (eds), *The Paths to Domination, Resistance and Terror*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Smith, L. 2006. *Uses of Heritage*. New York: Routledge.

Sztompka, P. 2008. The focus on everyday life: A new turn in sociology. *European Review*, 16 (1): 23-27.

Tumarkin, M. 2005. *Traumascapes: The Power and Fate of Places Transformed by Tragedy*. Victoria: Melbourne University Press.

Veschambre, V. 2005. Le recyclage urbain, entre démolition et patrimonialisation: enjeux s'appropriation symboliques de l'espace. *Norois*, 195: 79-92.

Veschambre, V. 2018. *Traces et mémoires urbaines: enjeux sociaux de la patrimonialisation et de la demolition*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes.

Zuev, D., Krase, J. 2017. Visual sociology. *Sociopedia.isa* 1-12; DOI: 10.1177/2056846017121.